# THE OLD MAN OF THE SEA

BY S. TEN EYCK BOURKE AND CHARLES FRANCIS BOURKE

"ANOTHER investigation!" Little Welsh, line gunner, "sky-skipper," and smallest man of Ships Bottom Life Saving Station on Barnegat Beach, No. 3 on the roster of the crew, and second in amount only after Captain Jim Casco and Long Johnson, Swedish No. 1, clanked into the mess-room, slammed his fancy braided service cap on the table, and slammed himself into a chair beside the last named two guards, both of whom were smoking mild pipes in perfect peace and quietude and gloom, and all three with their hands thrust deep down into breeches pockets, as if they suspected [illegible] large of designs on their brawny persons and possessions.

[illegible] was helped along by a general atmosphere which pervaded the place and all [illegible], who, serving and [illegible] Welsh, for-[illegible] doors and windows from the beach [illegible] house on this melancholy, gloomy [illegible] afternoon—abnormal functions of the three [illegible] and lethal sealants, also smoking.

For the crew of Ships Bottom was [illegible] spoke nobody without looking up. "I expect [illegible] that crazy Carmichael boat—[illegible]. I [illegible]

"[illegible] looking for His whack," the little gunner [illegible] the departation of one who had [illegible] Super [illegible]'s coming down—I heard [illegible] village. Those [illegible] recent acts o' Provi-[illegible] the Gridiron Reef has [illegible] the worst [illegible] service, losin' ships and pilin' up Ships [illegible] the average till—till the Govey'ment's [illegible] we can't make good. That's what!"

[illegible] out of breath, tempers, and indignations [illegible] silent save for the hoarse breathings [illegible] Ships Bottom? The Government [illegible] break — Wive Ships Bottom was the [illegible] the Barnegat wrecking beach—of the [illegible] Regiment! The pet cynic, recently elected [illegible] spending of that respect!

[illegible] crews' duty to prevent shipwreck, to [illegible] and save human life as well as other [illegible] [illegible] possible; now, for the last two or [illegible] week after week had piled up on Ships [illegible] a ream of hard luck unparalleled in the [illegible] coast.

"Hit us when we wasn't looking, them hookers did," as Little Welsh complained. "Come in a'most like the old Grid rock holed 'em in a purpose!"

The big ore freighter Copper King began it, disabled and sunk earlier in the wrecking season, two miles off shore, on the farthest-flung finger of Gridiron Reef,—that murderous Barnegat trap for ships that mariners dreaded, and hydrographers marked with a red circle on the chart. The twenty-thousand-tonner, an iron coffin crammed with copper ore, a ship-slicing cargo, and equipped, like all her sister-vessels of the King line, with fuel-saving electric motors, for some unexplained reason running without lights, went down at night in a weltering sea-fed howler, when the heavens turned to ebon-nimbus and the sea became a caldron—and she banged the reef like a battleship.

For her, Ships Bottom was not responsible: that was plain shipwreck; at least, they reached her in time to save her people. With the wrecks that followed, always on that same blunt-toothed reef, a league of hard rock thrust far out to sea like the knuckles bucy, where the Copper King went down, they did not always have such good luck.

"Eh'derric of ship ashore," Casco called it, and the inspectors agreed—at first. But when fourteen craft of varying tonnage, all iron-hulled "sinkers" except an ancient three-decker that literally fell to pieces of old age on the beach), had come rushing in to destruction, as it [illegible] on by some unseen, resistless force from that hidden clutch of the Gridiron's giant hand, a secret horror put fear into the hearts of Ships Bottom. The thing wasn't human!

Coincidentally, bound to Ships Bottom's troubles, as if under that same traitorous thrall, the Government wireless—installed primarily to assist the life station in warning coastwise craft off the dangerous shore reefs—had gone on strike along that ten-mile stretch of the Barnegat coast.

But the climax had come a few days before, when the Carmichael, an electrically propelled tanker, passing in ballast, had deliberately lopped a breaker and swerved from her course without a wheel turning, to wash in and commit suicide, in broad daylight and a moderate gale blowing, before the life savers could recover their senses and jump the boat to make out to her. "Engine trouble," the Carmichael's skipper called it; but the crew had gone to the funerary course, and for the first time Ships Bottom suffered the unutterable shame of seeing a passing tanker boat turn to it—"Wipe their eye!"

"How we goin' to head 'em off—lose'n we take up station two mile out on that limestone reef?" Captain Casco demanded, black shame gnawing at his soul.

"Them coast craft is all gone plumb lony: don't mind the wireless no more'n a lovesap! An' when they come in range of flare or flag, they're gone!"

Even the inspectors and the Washington authorities acknowledged that handicap,—the former with lurid language, the latter with experts and the installation of a hydrographic plane at Ships Bottom, to investigate the air currents and mysterious atmospheric conditions that affected the sick Government wireless, including the flag signals and the lights.

The engineers were still up in the air, and Lloyd's and the Maritime Exchange were facing unprecedented losses. Only the Bright Wrecking & Salvage Company (old Sam Bright, the Barnegat magnate, owner) had fattened on the toll of disaster. Bright seemed to smell out inordinate conditions: he had bid in everyone of the lost ships—"a'most 'fore they're wrecked," as Welsh put it—from the Copper King down; and his subsequent salving operations were hedged about with a shotgun secrecy that added greatly to the distavor in which the Barnegat beachmen held him.

These were the mysterious "acts of Providence," culminating in the loss of the Carmichael, which had brought the revenue superintendent down on Ships Bottom, and Little Welsh as advance guard with the news of threatened disruption to the crack crew.

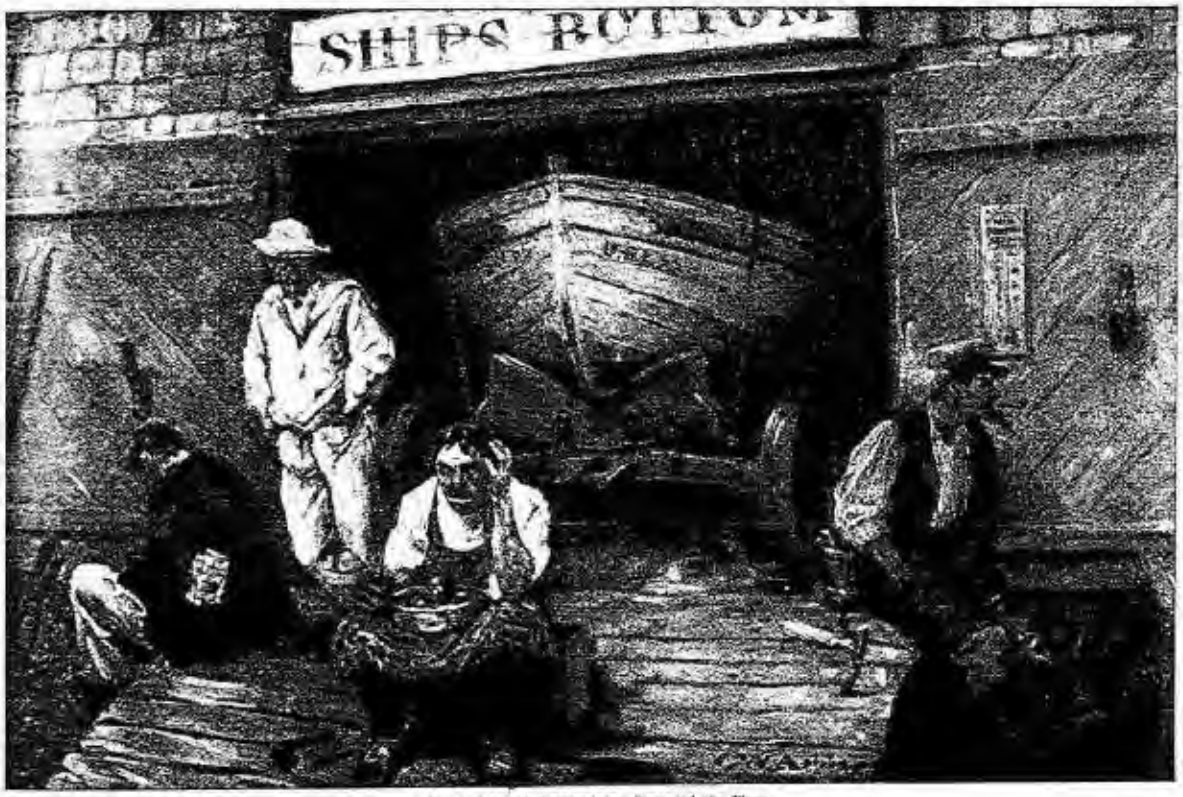
"Think we gone stale?" Welsh said.

The faces that glared at him were not pleasant, though their anger was not directed at him. That was the comfort. At whom, then? Not at the Government, nor the superintendent, nor the inspectors; not even themselves—or the reef they guarded.

WELSH, of all the Ships Bottom men, felt the situation most keenly. For his job was comparatively safe. As mechanician of the station, with experience in a previous Government aeroplane experiment, he was skipper of the hydroplane, "Welsh's windjammer," the air and water craft propelled by electric storage batteries that were charged, when needful, by the Barnegat wireless.

A great change had come over Little Tom Welsh since he took up his new employment: he was no longer the irrepressible little freshwater who faced death with a grin and jeered at the grim joking of the Gridiron Reef. Maybe it was the day. "Weepy," think, with a breathless air, as of a world choking, with glazed eyes,—a menacing clear, maybe the mysterious workings of the elements he had so recently mastered: at any rate on his sober, stalwart face was a look that even his companions in misery could not fathom.

He stamped out of the station, crossing the sands to




A General Air of Despondency Pervaded the Place.

the inlet and the bay beyond, and stopped at the lifeboat landing where the Government hydroplane lay moored, to scowl and have it out with his thoughts. Out on the Gridiron gray gulls squatted with lifeless pinions; Lighthouse Jack, the station's feathered familiar, alone circled slowly like a toy kite over the strange, flat-winged bird-ship that lay below with its long aluminum pontoons glistening in the sun's refractions. Ships Bottom was hidden in the hollow, Barnegat, over the empty bay, was like a deserted village, and the loneliness struck in like a fist.

"Somethin's going to happen right now!" Welsh growled. "You'd think that consarned thing 'ud behave!" he said, venting his spleen on the slumbering hydroplane. "What for did she lay down on me out on the Grid? An' then start running soon's the boat hauled me in, smooth as grease! Now the inspector won't let me work her, less'n it's ship alarm. I got a notion to go jine that dead ship digging comp'ny of Sam Bright's."

GLAD to have ye, Welshy! Good wages an' long hours, seven days off in summer. I heard you Bottom'll all be off right quick—for kind o'—foolin' things."

Welsh turned slowly, his mouth hard set, his eyes screwed up to pin points. A burly, yellow-faced man in sou'wester and seaboots grinned back at him from the slope of the sand dune,—Big Sam Bright himself, case hardened, brain and body, by picking apart the bones of dead ships. There was no love lost between Ships Bottom and Sam Bright and his salvage company,—organized for the express purpose, it seemed just then, to profit by the miseries of Welsh and his comrades.

The little surfman was like bottled up dynamite. He moved up closer, every steel muscle in his body crawling, but he spoke softly, "Ye think we're going to get it, do ye? An' you're so kind an' condescendin' as to offer me a job—you ghoul!"

Fighting, merely as a personal recreation, was sternly prohibited by the rules of the Life Saving Service; but Little Welsh was not fighting, as he subsequently explained to Surfman Evans, who just then happened to stick his shock head over the crest of a neighboring dune. Wrecker Bright was a size and a half larger than the gunner; but Welsh did not stop to weigh in. Besides, Bright started it, trusting to his superior weight and bulk.

But, facing that pent up volcano of wrath avenging the honor of his crew, the wrecker never had a chance. It was only when the spectator gasped from his sandhill "F'r lan's sake, Welshy, leave some for me!" that Little Welsh backed away, still glowering, but with a feeling of remorse that in former days he would have been a stranger to.

"Maybe ye think ye done me—'cause I ain't fit!" Bright began, heaving himself up.

Welsh laughed.

"Lemme tell you fellers!" the wrecker snarled, his greedy little eyes glinting evilly. "You're in bad, the hull bunch o' ye, an' the joke's on you, Tom Welsh, you an' your catamaran! If you on'y knew it, you'd clear off the hull—"

Bright stopped, shrugged his shoulders, and lurched away, laughing in spite of his hurts. Welsh and Evans stared after him.

"What ye s'pose that halfbreed pirut's got in mind?" Surfman Evans said. "Think he kin run us fellers off, an' fence in the rocks, like he done the Copper King—like she was solid gold 'stead o' jus high-grade copper ore—an' make a private graveyard on the Grid? Is that what he's gunning for?"

"That's jest what he's aimin' at!" Welsh shot his solid fist into the palm of his hand. "They're Old Man o' the Sea come to part along of the Copper King, an' Sam's hired him. It's wholesale barratry or leach robbery an' lyin' lights, mebby; but Sam Bright knows what's doing it. I'm going to ketch that old shipwreckin' devil, if he's up in the air, or on the sea, or under the rocks! I got the craft to do it, an' there she lays, with her ears cocked up, waitin' for the pan!"

He glowered down at the Government hydroplane, a powerful machine with her strong canvas wings, and broad aluminum pontoons,—long hollow air tanks they really were, flat on the bottom, and curved up at the bows for alighting or rising from the water.

"I got to clear off with my catamaran, have I?" said Skipper Welsh, his jaw squared, his blue eyes crinkled and snapping. "I'll do it to-night! You jes' watch my curves, Mister Shipwrecker Sam!"

SHIPS BOTTOM did not have long to wait, either, for the hydroplane's curves or the wrath of the menacing ocean, gathering its strength for another victim, gibing at them in the rising wind and the wash of the sullen breakers. Ships Bottom didn't need any warning of evil, watching with sleepless eyes from tower top, beach, and ocean. Maugre the prohibition of the inspector (for which he placed a liberal construction), Welsh put to sea, skimming out of the inlet, full power on the hydroplane.

"If they's devil's work afoot, an' I feel it in my bones,—it'll come out o' this water. Anyhow, we're all on the beach. Ships Bottom's stuck!"

"There goes Lighthouse Jack, trailin' after Welshy's windjammer like he was afraid to be alone," Captain Casco remarked to the gloomy Johnson, as they watched the hydroplane breasting the mackerel waves like a gray gull.

The sea was flattening rather than rising as the wind arose, a sou'east twister, crying mad as it came. Just like the Copper King night!

"I reckon ye better get that life car cleared for action, Johnny," Casco said. "If one o' them sea wagons does smash on, it's the on'y way to get 'em. Time we were movin' out. What's Welshy up to?"

They saw the hydroplane, only a sliver at sea now, suddenly dip sidewise, barely missing the rocks, where the end of the bluestone reef showed above the surface. The machine spurted out and up, as if dodging the swoop of a mighty, invisible hand. For a moment it zigzagged up, Welsh driving it high to look over the horizon, then in a wide arc swung back to shore.

"That red rock reached for him, Jem! I see it when he sprung!" Long Johnson looked at his Captain with eyes that held a lurking fear.

Casco forced a laugh. The hydroplane alighted on the bay, with the big fanwheel buzzing behind it, and turned slowly into the landing.

Little Welsh, white to his tanned forehead, seemed dazed when they questioned him. "Same way I had trouble before. Something grabbed—"

"Like Johnny here seen it—" Casco began. He stopped.

The three men stood staring,—hard-faced, iron-nerved surfmen who faced death daily as a trade. The unknown, the unfathomable, gripped them, the fear that sailors know and men that traverse the high heavens.

"Holy smoke!" Welsh shook himself and sprang up the beach. "The hull Atlantic's washin', Cap!" he cried. "I see it when I got up, an' a stemwinder in the thick of it!"

The heavens had blackened as by the sweep of a mighty brush, blotting out sun and sky. The ocean turned to ink, silvered by leaping fish. Sand dunes shifted, swept baywsrd. The whistling buoy sobbed out at sea. A sonorous roar traversed Gridiron Reef with the rush of a railroad train, and the sea swept in, filling the gullies, cracking the inlet, and overflowing into the bay.

"Something of a tidal wave, sir?" Casco roared cheerfully. "Ain't nothin' we can't see there!"

Ships Bottom was at professional work, weather-bleached faces scanning the ocean. From the station tower the bell tolled thrice—"Ships' sighted!" Casco's binoculars picked one up, floundering up coast and making bad weather of it.

"Algonquin: twenty-thousand-tonner, King liner," the life Captain recited evenly; then, in a bull's bellow, "I'd give a month's pay to see her stern down nor'ard! She's sister ship to the Copper King!"

The Algonquin, just as the Copper King had done, was bowling up the coast with the sea on her quarter, crowding the shoreline because she dared not turn broadside to the gale, deep laden as she was. Twice she tried out, as Casco watched, and each time the seas rolled over her iron deck.

"Next time she turns out she'll turn turtle!" the Captain growled. "An' they's a' even chance she'll go by, this weather. He'd better beach her."

"Draws thirty feet, an' the Grid marks thirty: ore loaded to the gunels, she is—that should do engrave it!" Little Welsh had pounced on the Coastwise Record, looking up the coming ship. "Thirty of her crew too!"

"That'll be a gun load for the motor, or three loads for the lifeboat, tight packed—I don't trust their boats," Casco said. "Get busy, Boys, 'fore it's dark. What's you?" The Captain swept the sea with his glass. "Just our luck! I knowed we're goin' to git it! That's a rev'nue boat yonder, butting in! See her flash!"

A pale flare, far out to sea, flecked the sky, black now as the inside of a hat. No need to tell the Ships Bottom crew that a loafing coaster in that weather, working her searchlight, was other than a Government craft. "Wyandotte, most likely: she's on the beat," Casco said.

THE Algonquin, even now, did not seem to recognize her danger from the lurking reef. Far down the beach the patrol was burning warning Coston lights, one after the other. The Government wireless operator was trying to raise the ship, sending up crashing blue-green volleys, and over the life station flapped the stream of code signals. Cleared for action, the powerful Ships Bottom motor, fit to hold a ship's crew, nosed the landing in the bay: the lifeboat lay alongside, a flat iron pontoon, that would carry a half-score men on a hawser or through a seaway, with airholes punched upward through its cover to keep the sea from seeping in. The crew seldom bothered with that.

A hurried clanging from the watchtower told them of the coming up of the ship on the reef, blundering through the smother that sometimes hid her from sight of the beach. Overhead the wireless clashed its useless volleys to the void. But the ship held on—

"She's bent on hari-kari, an' blind!" Casco raged. "Jump arr, Boys!"

"I can't raise the rev'nue, an' that ship won't answer," the wireless operator complained. "Looks like that Gover'ment boat is trying to fetch her, from her flash. You fellows ain't got much time!"

The crew sprang for the boat. As the men tumbled in, Little Welsh, crouching over the motor box, looked up with a scared face.

"She won't work! Gone dead!" He flung down his tools, crying mad. "Sticks like molasses! We can't use the power! Sail her!"

To beat out in the big motor, using her lugsails, that was Ships Bottom's only chance. At that, the revenue would beat them to it—wipe their eye again! But the hydroplane was there to warn ships in peril—if only it would work!

"She's got to work!" Welsh snarled. He was out of the boat and clawing out on the bird-ship's forward planes. "Zip! She's all harsh, Cap! I can beat out in that blow. Mebby the rev'nue'll git the bird; but Ships Bottom'll be there to say howdy!"

"A single Coston may scare her off. Good luck to ye, Welshy!" the Captain cried.

"Tell 'em we're comin'!" roared the crew.

WELSH took no chance of turning a somersault or smashing up before he started—better the surf than the windlash of the wind. Those men knew what to do, given half a chance. High on the sand dune, Captain Casco watched the peril at sea and directed operations. A surfman, wading and swimming, crossed the inlet, and when the hydroplane on her flat pontoons charged the swashing on the sands two men on the ends of a half-inch line helped her through. When Welsh cleared it, topping the first big breaker, the lifeboat was already lying down on the wind, snoring for the cut. He heard Casco bawling something, but he lost it in the storm. Dead ahead, a fitful glimmer, he guessed the revenue cutter's searchlight: the freighter was somewhere in that rolling mist of sea smoke.

"No lights—no siren—actin' jus' like the other she is!" Welsh was thinking of the Copper King, ill-fated fellow liner to this one in the darkness, and the long roll of disaster she initiated. "That reef got every one o' 'em!"

It was the lure of the reef he was trying to fight from memory—no hard job in the work he had on hand. Stout as she was, the hydroplane, with his light weight, was making bad weather of it, as well she might—whipsawing like an angry darning needle over the surface of the sea. To rise from the water would be fatal in that overhead blast. Welsh crouched, a drowned rat, over the driving wheel, steering by instinct in the black sea smother.

"They'll need lights hull out there!" he gasped.

He was out over a mile now, nearly as he could judge, the motor running fine. "Welsh's windjammer," alone of the apparatus of the beach, was making good. The thin planes cut the wind like a knife. The reef through the night fled past like phantoms—and suddenly he saw and cried out. The ship had beat him to it!

The freighter Algonquin,—he could almost read the gilt letters on her bow,—a wallowing black hulk, twin funneled, lay broadside to the sea, farther out. She had almost passed the sunken reef; but she was not whistling now—Welsh saw that. The ship's engines had stopped; every light was out: and suddenly an ominous grumbling, deep down, on the ship's keel—scraping the reef!

Caught in her stride, the Algonquin turned slowly to

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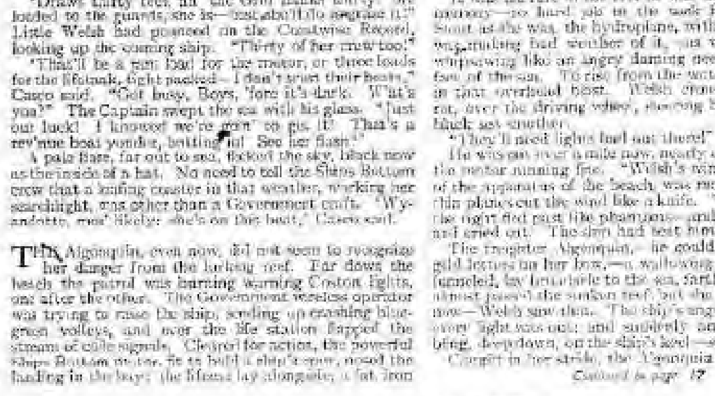

"You Can't Kill a Ships Bottom Man!"

course of his four university years. A broad man with a variety of interests and with little narrowness of vision is to be commended; but it is the purpose of this short article to sound a note of warning.

Several articles have already in a conscientious and thorough manner elaborated the shortcomings of our American institutions of learning. They have compared the American senior with those men in English and Continental universities who are about to take their degrees, and the comparison has been considered to be entirely to the advantage of the latter. Of course, the comparison cannot be wholly fair, since the scheme of study in the English and French and German universities makes definitely for more or less specialization. When a man takes his degree on the other side he does in a very real sense know a great deal about one or a few subjects or branches of study. His work has been markedly intensive. Moreover, it is only too apparent that the young man abroad has [illegible] opportunities in music, art, and [illegible] such as can be found in few places in America. However, whatever the differences [illegible] conditions and environment, the great [illegible] the American college man, and a [illegible] that the freshman should face and [illegible] against, is that he tends to have too [illegible] interests. Too large a proportion is [illegible] upon activities in college affairs.

One would [illegible] of course advocate that the freshman should become a grind. If he is athletic, so [illegible] the better—if athletics *per se* do not become his sole endeavor. But when a man attempts scholastic work, athletic success, political leadership, social prominence, and adds to these participation in the musical, literary, dramatic, or religious sides of university life,—a variety of interests actually attempted by many of our college men,—he is attempting too much. Something must suffer. He inevitably becomes a Jack of all trades and master of none, and the realization of this fact becomes quite painful when in the early years of professional and business life he meets college graduates who have not so erred. But, lest I be misunderstood, far worse than the man who does too much is the man who does nothing. Every freshman should discover at least one branch of work outside the classroom for which he has a natural bent. His service to the university community along this line is his duty and his privilege.

Just one more suggestion. The American Rhodes scholars at Oxford have specially admired the keen interest of all Englishmen in sport. No matter if a man can never by any chance make a 'Varsity team, he should nevertheless go out and play on minor teams. We must develop in this country intercollegiate athletics. Too much attention is now paid to the picked men. The mediocre and average athlete must be given his chance. At Oxford and Cambridge it is literally true that seventy-five per cent. of the students are engaged every afternoon during university terms in some branch of sport. There are no bleacherites.

# THE OLD MAN OF THE SEA

Continued from page 6

the sea, [illegible] back. She was hulking [illegible] and she knew it, and her crew knew [illegible] [illegible] like rats on the deck. [illegible]

But W[illegible] [illegible] interested in her fate, then. H[illegible] [illegible] trying to save himself from falling [illegible] into the breakers that were doing [illegible] best to fight the hydroplane for [illegible] stunning blows, blinding him. [illegible] and buffeting. The machine [illegible] almost dead, the electric [illegible] had done with him [illegible] in the grip of the Old Man of the [illegible] [illegible] sea, leaving [illegible] [illegible] the Copper King [illegible] foundered under [illegible]

Little W[illegible] [illegible] all through [illegible] floating in the big breakers [illegible] to tear the hydroplane apart [illegible] machine had struck [illegible] in the same place [illegible] natural waters. Steel [illegible] something slight, resistance [illegible] fighting could not last. Besides [illegible] was rushing down at him in the white [illegible] held him.

[illegible] but he did it, [illegible] on the aluminum framework [illegible] the flaring gun [illegible] [illegible] and he dropped [illegible] signal [illegible] clung to the bobbing bylock [illegible] at least [illegible] signal [illegible] though it [illegible] Ships Bot[illegible]

[illegible] the freighter in the [illegible] ghost ship, told him [illegible] in the [illegible] to the rescue. From the ship [illegible] rattle of anchor chains [illegible] make her way through the [illegible] length away, spattering [illegible] rumblings of a shifting [illegible] at her last moorings. [illegible] Welsh watched his [illegible] dragged down by the shifting [illegible] to the rocks, or both. Whichever [illegible] Hang on!

The [illegible] over the hydroplane, [illegible] The plane [illegible] The little aeroplane had [illegible] in the teeth of a [illegible] dropped the temperature [illegible] He was chilled to the bone. [illegible] in the grip of [illegible] in his efforts to [illegible] His breath was coming in gasps [illegible] horror of his surrounding [illegible] the fight in his [illegible] [illegible] was fast going. Shadows seemed [illegible] from the sea, floating and moving.

"[illegible] ahoy!" [illegible] to the [illegible] on his [illegible]

Welsh opened his dazed eyes. No [illegible] Big Jim Crowe's crew [illegible] [illegible] from the Gridiron Reef Ships [illegible] came heaving through the [illegible] She swung [illegible]

ridden away, a glorious sight to the glazing eyes of Little Welsh. Her curved bows flinging the spray, her men [illegible] all eyes on the sinking ship. [illegible] forward, making a trumpet of his hands. The flat shape of the [illegible] closed after the motor.

A gust of warmth swelled Little Welsh's heart. "That's the ticket. They got the old gir' with 'em! She haulin' around!" With the lifesaver—that was the only way—they could pick off the [illegible] men of the [illegible]. "The [illegible] ain't in it now," he chuckled.

But where did he come in to help? The men could not see him for the spume and smother of the Gridiron, and he crouched, an image of ice crusted by the sea salt, his thumbs frozen on him. The bullets had no power to [illegible] a light. Ships Bottom had [illegible] on board. The [illegible] was [illegible] for death. Larue, when they got them, maybe—

Scowling, fumbling with his brows and his wheel, he forgot fear and cold. "I'm always gettin' the short end of the stick!" But they better give her while the going's good!

Suddenly Welsh had seen that ships go down before, the [illegible] of them, but he had dreamed of no wreck like this. It was horrible, unnatural, like everything that concerned the cursed reef—'wondy!' A ship [illegible] by [illegible] The murderous power that caught ships and aeroplanes, that sucked out the breath of the [illegible] and killed [illegible] going to get him! He [illegible] in through the [illegible] his [illegible]

Well—Ships Bottom was going, she, anyhow! The [illegible] that was [illegible] He was growing sleepy. The wavering shapes came again. That fool freighter was trying to stand on end!

The *Mountain* was so close he could hear the [illegible] the whole length of the ship aside. Her crew had taken to the bow. The after half of her deck was under water. Her bow, reared up, leaped an eighteen-foot [illegible] that struggled and [illegible] cables. Welsh could look into her [illegible] reared near the end like [illegible] "[illegible] she's backing down in a hole!" he gasped and caught his breath, thoroughly [illegible]

Was that the solution of the mystery? Was there a funnel [illegible] there in the [illegible] huge hole yawning in the ocean floor, [illegible] through which [illegible] sand [illegible] when the Copper King [illegible] the reef? Was that what [illegible] them down, sucking them in [illegible] the sinking ship sucks down [illegible] Welsh had heard of such things, [illegible] and [illegible] that swallowed [illegible] and were [illegible] that would not account for the [illegible] engines, [illegible] light and power. Only Sam Bruce the [illegible] knew the truth.

A CHEER came from the [illegible] and through the smoke and the blinding spray Welsh glimpsed [illegible]

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the vessel's bow,—the lifecar, floated back from the lifeboat, standing up to windward with the end of a hawser. From its bowels a figure rose up, hurling a line. Big Jem Casco. Then the sailors hauled in, and Casco went up, hand over hand, and the Algonquin's crew started climbing down.

The cutter must have seen the peril too, and Ships Bottom's preparations for the rescue. She swung off to one side, training her searchlights on the wreck, lighting up the scene like day. One beam of light fell on the hydroplane, and Welsh laughed.

"Oh, I'm hooked too! Soon as she flops over on me—bang! This— Gosh!"

The hydroplane was working! He had not shut off the motor, and now it moved with an intermittent purring, the fanwheel, hung high above the wash, lashing out behind. The hurt ship was still fast, her aluminum runners glued to the sea; but the motor was gathering courage. Welsh watched, raging.

Twice more the lifecar washed back to the wreck, each time carrying away her load of sailors. The third time she nearly came to grief. A sudden burst of smoke streamed upward, smothering the scene. The sea had reached the fires. The ship was down to her fore peak now, funnels and deckhouses under water. When the smoke cleared the lifecar was gone. The single survivor remained in the triangular scrap of wreckage.

That was Casco, doing the "hero act," surrendering his place in the lifecar! He was balancing up there, bathed in the revenue's searchlights, which picked out his ribbed life jacket, strapped round his mighty chest. The whole ship had slumped. Over the sinking bow Welsh saw Ships Bottom's boat, packed with the saved crew.

But the hydroplane was moving at last; and, as one notices little things, Welsh saw the burnt-out handle of his Coston torch swept away from where it had clung all through the driving wash.

Afterward he had cause to remember that. He knew now only that he was free.

"I bet the Algonquin's plugged up that hole in the sea an' hi, me local!" he said. "I'll get Casco myself!"

THE hydroplane lurched out again—out of the whirlpool this time! The motor worked strong. On both quarters of the freighter's sinking bow the breakers crashed back; but Welsh bored up between them. Going shoreward, he'd probably turn head over heels; but "Big Jem's first rate ballast, at that!" he chuckled.

The hydroplane had not done so badly, after all! She had saved Ships Bottom's men; she had fetched in the revenue cutter and flared out the lifeboat. And now she was going to save Jim Casco, the man who was worth them all!

Across the maelstrom of wreckage he drove the whirring machine, regardless of the suction that could drag down any other craft but this. Nothing could sink the hydroplane! She was built for just such emergencies, skimming on her air-tight pontoons, lunged up by the very blast that fought her back, despite her battered planes. Over adrift and water she vaulted, landing on her upcurved runners right over the wreck. But the bow had vanished. Casco sprang in the waters snatched for him, sprawling in a heap on the hydroplane's deck.

"All down!" Welsh shouted gleefully. "Never lost a pilot—"

"The little white dog!" Casco gasped. "D'ye see the terrier?"

"The dog?" shot Welsh. "It's lost a pore boy, after all I done?"

Hydroplane and men were [illegible] sailing shoreward. A few feet away a white object bobbed on the surface, sending up a pitiful yap. Welsh jerked the seat strap loose.

"Take her, Jem!" he snarled. "I'm goin' to get that tike!"

He sprang far out, swimming strong, hand over hand. The white terrier went under, and Welsh with him, diving and swimming down, following the struggling speck. His lungs were bursting even when he grasped it; but you can't drown a Barnegat man. In the act of turning upward, he caught sight of a drowned hulk deep down—

The Copper King! A strange ship now, with bursted sides and—her uncanny spilling of the rocks!

A luminous light flooded the life saver's brain as he shot to the surface, a light that suddenly revealed the mystery of the "swamping reef."

"The ghoul! Sam Bright never raised a scrap o' that ore—left it there a purpose when he found the copper made a magnet of the bluestone reef! The—the Old Man o' the Sea!"

The hydroplane had blown shoreward. Casco was still traveling against his will, till the Ships Bottom motorboat overhauled him, snaring in. Welsh and the fox terrier they hauled aboard drenched and delighted, and later picked up Casco with the remnants of the hydroplane; for the brawny life Captain was no hydroplane skipper, and he scored Welsh roundly.

BUT Welsh's alleged discovery set them all by the ears. In congress assembled, Ships Bottom listened gravely when Welsh related what he had seen (deep down by the refraction of the cutter's searchlights) and the deductions he had drawn from his discovery.

"O' course, if they was some nat'ral deviltry of that kind, it 'ud let us out," Casco agreed. "Then again, it might ha' been just a run o' hard luck."

"Or a hole that old Copper King knocked in the bottom o' the ocean, w'en she rammed the reef, eh?" Welsh said scornfully.

"That 'ud swamp ships, all right," the crew agreed; "on'y—"

"On'y," Welsh cried, "wha's to hinder it from fillin' up? An' how'd that ball up the wireless all along the coast? An' the motor engines— No, Sir, a magnet it was that latched my runners and pulled down that Algonquin ship, a big electric sea magnet. That's what that twenty thousand tons o' copper ore and bluestone mixture made of the Gridiron! It drawed all the juice from the wireless—an' that made enough 'lectricity to put motors out o' commission for ten mile round; and muddle up iron ships across the Atlantic, a'most, with a good strong wind behind. That's what the Copper King done. We wasn't to blame when iron ships went crazy without due notice—"

For a certainty Ships Bottom hoped so. And maybe that view was shared by the Board of Inquiry, which arrived on the very cutter that had lighted up their daring work of rescue. At any rate, the learned board made investigation and expert analysis of the reef, and listened to Little Welsh's theories as expounded by one who had solved a marine marvel, a far-reaching menace of the sea. "Such monumental imagination deserves respect," they gravely agreed. Whatever they might think, "the very immensity of Little Welsh's explanation makes it worthy of acceptance." And Welsh was jubilant.

Ships Bottom was satisfied too. Everybody was satisfied—except Sam Bright, of the wrecking company. But Bright's fate was in Government hands now.

"If Welshy's right, Sam must a found out too, soon's he got his wreckin' ap'ratus on the Copper King," Casco said soberly. "That'd account for why he kep' everybody off,—so's we wouldn't find he'd left her cargo be. Tradin' in shipwrecks!"

"But what we want to know, how come it these magnet waves let go on you for awhile after they gripped ye, Welshy?" That's what the crew wanted to know. "How d'ye know it wasn't a whirlpool sucked ye down in' the freighter,—you and your Hertz'an waves an' things?"

Welsh waved aside the doubters with disdain. "Oh, that? Why, w'en the Algonquin struck, she let down her bridge anchor, didn't she? She was full o' copper too, iron ship. She just drawed off all the 'lectric fluid. Broke the current, you might say."

The crew of Ships Bottom drew a long breath. So long as she didn't break them—they had her to thank for that.

"Here's who you got to thank for that," Little Welsh cried, swinging up the tiny white terrier. "He laid the Old Man of the Sea—him an' the hydroplane! Oh, Sled had!"

# THE SPY

Continued from page [illegible]

refusal to pay taxes! Do you realize what it would have meant? No payment of taxes! The Government could not exist, it would have been impotent to enforce its will! Not a cent for the Government treasury—even the customs officials would have declined to collect duties! The people laughing at the tax collectors—what a spectacle for the civilized world! Despotism starved out of office! And it was all spoiled—it was all spoiled—"

His voice, which had trailed to a hoarse whisper, was broken by a sob. For a long minute he stood bowed against the table, overcome with emotion. Then, lifting the green vial to the gaslight, he permitted the light to play on it, as if the sight of this transparent fluid gave him keen inward delight.

"For ten years our brethren all over the world have toiled and starved and saved," he went on. "Seven million rubles we had gathered—it was all intrusted to your care. In this country, in your hands, the money should have been safe." He bent down, while his eyes narrowed on the four silent men. "That money never reached us!" he snapped. "It was intercepted by the police. They had information from an inner source. In Russia I was the only person aware of the existence of the fund. I confided in no one. The traitor was on this side—a member of this committee."

The others gravely inclined their heads.

"I cannot conceive of any member of the Central Committee guilty of an act of betrayal," said Bernstein, the oldest of the group. "The plan to free Russia was so elaborate that the police could have learned of it through a hundred sources."

"Of the plan, yes," acknowledged Jarkov. "Of the money, no!" He dropped into a chair, his elbows resting on the table, his chin supported on his closed hands.

"We will endeavor to discover the traitor—here—now—among ourselves," he went on. "Every man's part in the transmission of the money shall be scrutinized carefully. And when we discover the spy, he—he shall drink—this!" He pointed significantly toward the green vial. "Sixty men and women are in prison now because of his treachery. A great cause shattered—sixty people undergoing the tortures of Siberia! But I shall sit here and watch him while he writhes in agony. He will see my face rejoicing in his pain."

The fear-stricken confusion written in the faces of the four men was intensified by the yellowish gaslight that diffused itself about the room.

"Who arranged for the transmission of the money?" demanded Jarkov.

As if moved by common impulse, the eyes of three members of the group turned accusingly toward Benjamin. He leaned back in his chair, pale, haggard, a cold perspiration beaded on his forehead.

"Only he knew of it," declared Bernstein solemnly. "It was agreed, for greater safety, that only one of us should be entrusted with the money. We left it all to him—he was the only one who could have betrayed us."

Jarkov's form was shaken by a violent tremor. He looked helplessly toward the young man, his eyes pleading for some word of denial, some explanation, a repudiation. But Benjamin only trembled and seemed to grow cold.

"Speak! In Heaven's name, speak!" cried Jarkov. "You, my own Benjamin!" Then, moved by a sudden revulsion of feeling, he seized the young man by the shoulders, as if to shake the facts out of him. "I want the truth—do you hear?" he demanded. "The truth—no evasions."

Benjamin's lips parted as if to speak; but the words died unuttered. He buried his face in his hands, sobbing violently. Finally he roused himself, as if from a stupor. "I alone am responsible," he said firmly.

The others recoiled from him as if he had delivered them a blow, whereas [illegible] was expected. Benjamin, conscious of the growing aversion they felt toward him, bent forward in his seat and made as if to speak. But a violent rattling of the doorknob distracted the strained attention of everyone in the room.

THE noise persisted, until Benjamin, in response to a signal from Jarkov, rose from his seat and opened the door. An exclamation of surprise burst from his lips. It was echoed by the others. A woman's form, dimly outlined in the murky doorway, revealed itself to their astonished gaze. She stood there, perfectly calm and self possessed, gathering to herself the light in the darkness of the hallway.

While the five men noticed, dismayed by her unexpected presence, she stepped into the room and threw up her heavy veil. A look of recognition leaped into the eyes of the men as they beheld her beautiful, classical features, shadowed by the wide brim of her big hat.

"Olga!" exclaimed Benjamin, whose face grows paler. "Where have you been the last two months?"

She met the menacing scowls of the men resolutely, proceeding with slow deliberation to remove her gloves. The shimmer of jewels on her slender, graceful hands produced a heightened feeling of amazement among the onlookers, as if they wondered where she had acquired these costly rings.

"I see you are surprised," she said, forcing a smile. "Let me inform you that this is no accidental interruption of your proceedings. My melodramatic entry was carefully timed by your own words. Look up at the ceiling!"

They gazed upward; but saw only an uneven area of cracked plaster, on which dirt and cobwebs had accumulated.

"There is a hole near the gas fixture," she